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By-Bock, Joleen

Improvement of Instruction in Junior College Through Utilization of Auxiliary Personnel.

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Federal funding has made available to the schools much material and equipment, but has not provided the additional manpower to make use of it. (An exception is the Vocational Education Act, which provides some personnel funding.) The need for auxiliary technical and teaching personnel is also evident in the teacher's burden of routine work. Depending on background and ability, the aide could take over housekeeping, clerical, data processing, and mechanical chores, operate audiovisual equipment and produce its materials, and even have some interaction with students, as in testing and interviewing. It appears that the use of auxiliary personnel could improve both instruction and research in the junior college. The benefits cannot be accurately predicted--the aides must be appropriately trained and their use evaluated. Their employment would be worth considering as an innovation in itself, and would give the teacher time to be innovative in other areas, to redesign curricula, and generally to pursue academic excellence. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (HH)

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IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION IN [illegible]

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One educational premise which finds small difference of opinion among instructors, administrators and students is the desirability of improving instruction. This is also an area of agreement among local, state and federal educational agencies. In the junior college the federal government has given specific attention to this need through Title VI of the Higher Education Act - Improvement of Undergraduate Instruction. This Act makes available equipment and materials on a matching financial basis in defined subject areas. It concerns closed-circuit television and other audio visual equipment, but there is no provision for auxiliary personnel to support the programs. This is the same problem that occurred with the ESEA, Title II and HEA Title II Acts which provided library materials. The result of these acts has been to supply educational institutions with million of dollars worth of equipment and materials with no guarantee that they would be properly utilized. In contrast, the Vocational Education Act provides personnel funding in some phases and, as a result, recipients of funds are in a better position to profit from the legislation. An educational media bill being presented to Congress during the next session will include support for auxiliary personnel.

Federal funding has brought about a change in the needs of instructors from requests for equipment to requests for personnel. As a recent series of meetings with junior college faculty members, this writer heard repeated emphasis being given to the concept that, if funding was not available for auxiliary personnel, the purchase of equipment was of little value to the classroom instructor. The elementary schools have come to grips with the personnel problem and are attempting to solve it through support of aides of all types, both volunteer and paid. In the recent Hebert study (1970) it

found that in 1967, 41% of the districts enrolling 6,000 or more had some form of teacher auxiliaries.

Harold Howe, speaking about the educational manpower deficit indicated that, as of many undesirable situations, there is some good to be derived from this shortage of personnel. (14:57) "The severe shortage of fully trained personnel may be a blessing in disguise - it forces us to analyze whether or not we make the best use of people we have. And it forces us to pull out of each fully trained person's daily activities those things that can be legitimately performed by someone with substantially less training." He supports the problem mentioned above concerning the ineffective utilization of hard and software both from an instructor's lack of mechanical skill and his lack of time to plan for its use.

Auxiliary teaching personnel was considered at a higher level by Wetzler at the Institute for Junior College Administrative Teams in 1964. He suggests that there is a need for individuals with at least a bachelor's degree in the subject area who can take over the classroom, grade papers and handle student interviews (30). This is the same concept as the teaching assistant in four-year college and would be susceptible to all of the ills of this program, which is so highly criticized by students, except for one factor suggested by Bindra (2). If the teaching assistant is a full-time employee, he would not have to be re-trained each year as is necessary when using graduate students in the current concept of the teaching assistant in higher education. This is supported by Metzner's finding that successful teacher aide programs include the use of aides on a full-time basis (17).

Uses of Auxiliary Personnel

Use of elementary teacher aides began with housekeeping and clerical tasks and was thought of only as a passive means of assistance. Acceptance of this phase by teachers and administrators led to a new role for the aide -- one of interaction with students -- at first only on the playground or in the lunchroom, but later in storytelling and small group or individual tutoring, depending upon the background of the aide. Operation of audio-visual equipment and production of media materials has also been added to the tasks designated for the aide.

In addition to this more traditional use of auxiliary personnel, Rioux suggests the use of community resource assistants (24). The junior college purports to reflect community needs, but has little personnel time to conduct thorough surveys on which to base these needs. An aide used in this area could conduct surveys after they have been developed by the college staff. Perhaps this is the place for trained volunteers. Elementary school systems have long utilized the services of volunteers, but the junior college has been slow to explore this source of manpower. "Trained" volunteer aides is stressed because no aide program, paid or volunteer, should be instituted without proper pre-service training.

A junior college instructor, according to Cohen (4:22), has three large areas of importance in his planning: specifying objectives, constructing measuring devices and plotting learning paths. The last two mentioned can most certainly profit from use of auxiliary personnel. One measuring instrument which is in need of improvement is the formal test. A trained test technician could analyze data and help the instructor to compile

results against objectives previously determined. In connection with plotting learning paths, the instructor might decide that audio or visual devices would be useful. In this event, any number of graphic art, photography, sound or other audio-visual technicians would be useful.

The need for supportive media specialists is readily shown by Fredenburgh in his discussion of team teaching and use of a learning resources facility (10:16). Large class instruction could utilize video tape materials, overhead projections, slide, tape or filmstrip materials or an immediate response system, all of which could be more effectively handled with assistance of trained technicians.

As pointed out by numerous writers, one of the most neglected areas in the junior college is that of research. Since one of the things which differentiates the junior college from four-year college and university is its emphasis on teaching rather than on research, this is often minimized by an institution. Institutional research is gaining favor in the sight of administrators and governing bodies. A research specialist, aided by a data processing specialist could greatly benefit the instructional program. The education field is deluged with descriptive information regarding teaching techniques, materials used, etc., but is just beginning to realize the importance of, and implement the use of, well organized research in the teaching area.

The library technical assistant could be used in the classroom to introduce use of indexes or similar library materials as well as to perform many tasks in the library.

Types of Auxiliary Personnel and Education Required

Auxiliary personnel useful in junior college instruction appear to fall into the following categories:

A. Laboratory Technician (commonly used in language, science and vocational laboratories)

B. Media Production Specialist
   1. Graphics
   2. Photography
   3. Sound
   4. Video

C. Media Equipment Operator
D. Library Technical Assistant
E. Test Technician
F. Data Processing Specialist
G. Research Specialist
H. Community Resource Assistant
I. Teaching Assistant

In educational background these range from an individual needing only a high school education and pre-service training (the media equipment operator) through the research specialist needing at least a master's degree. In salary range, it will vary from the volunteer through the various ranges of classified and certificated schedules. In analyzing this, it appears that the term "auxiliary personnel" is a more accurate pronouncement of the junior college need, than the narrow concept of "teacher aide" as commonly used.

Where will these auxiliaries be trained? It is very simple to say that as the educational background needs varies, so will the place of training vary. However, when we get to the specifics of who is providing planned programs for these people, there is need for investigation through another study. By examining the list above, it can be determined that

technical and professional schools in electronic and artistic elements of the program can provide background for this type of auxiliary. Colleges and universities can produce individuals with subject area facility needed for language and science laboratories, as well as people schooled in research, data processing, and testing. Teacher assistant programs for elementary aides are beginning to appear. Grossmont College, City College of San Francisco and Rio Hondo Junior College are presently offering these programs in California. Many more are in planning stages.

Library Technical Assistants have been trained for some time in California. There are more than thirty programs in the state. Following a state-wide conference in January, 1968, preliminary course outlines are being written and distributed throughout the state. This is an attempt to get concensus of librarians on a core curriculum so that employers hiring these graduates can be assured that they have the same basic background. Nationwide there are more than 100 programs. The development is so rapid that there was widespread anxiety in the library profession that improper training was being given, and that these assistants were being used improperly by employers. The NEA report Auxiliary School Personnel discussed this in relation to teacher aides and met the problem forthrightly: "It is possible that, on some occasions, aides will be used instead of teachers in order to save money. It will probably not happen often, but it would be foolish to ignore the possibility of its happening sometime... One safeguard against the exploitation of teacher aides is to have the functions of auxiliary personnel largely determined by teachers...Since aides will be working directly with them, teachers should share the

responsibility of seeing that they fulfill their proper functions," (19:16-17). This is equally applicable to the library technical assistant. The Library Education Division of the American Library Association is sponsoring an interdivisional committee and working with the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Audio-Visual Instruction of the NEA, Council on Library Technology and American Association of Junior Colleges to establish criteria for establishing and evaluating these programs. At the same time they are writing behavioral objectives for each field of library endeavor to help delineate tasks between the professional librarian and the Library Technical Assistant.

The NEA Department of Audio-Visual Instruction has funded a project this year to gather information on the types of audio-media specialists needed, what specific tasks they will be expected to perform, how the training of these individuals shall be organized and what types of institutions should be involved in this training. This study will provide the data needed for implementation of programs which will provide personnel recommended in the educational media legislation now being prepared.

Possible Benefits

Trump, in his 1961 study, (27) feels that auxiliary personnel will eliminate some of the inefficient use of certificated time and may assist the profession in recruiting and retaining individuals in the education profession. He indicates that "About a third of a teacher's day goes to clerical and sub-professional tasks, another third to work that could just as well be done by various kinds of automated devices. A situation that

provides only a third of a day for performance of work he is trained to do--and finds satisfaction in doing--contributes little to the morale of a talented, conscientious teacher."

Clement (3) reiterated the same idea in 1962. "We want teachers to be creative--to experiment, to improve--yet we keep them bored by clerical work...It is only common sense to place people at the level of their best talent. This appears prevalent in business and industry, but seems lacking in education."

Denemark (7:18) adds increased leadership as another dimension to the possible positive effects of using auxiliary personnel. "A differentiation of roles may involve giving greater leadership opportunities to outstanding teachers by providing them with the support and assistance of professional and sub-professional associates."

Little attention seems to have been given in the literature at this time to the benefits to the students, which after all, is the raison d'etre for all education. This will undoubtedly come later. The first hurdle to jump was to convince instructors that use of auxiliaries was a good idea. At first glance it may seem obvious; however, it is revolutionary in one way. By having other individuals assume as much as two-thirds of what an instructor has been doing, this leaves the insecure individual with the feeling that he will be lost without all the minute detail to handle. Some instructors lack the managerial qualitites for supervising auxiliary personnel and may find it difficult to assume this role. This points up a benefit that may help solve the ever-present discussion as to whether education is

a profession or not. By eliminating the para-professional tasks from an instructor's day, this may give him time and impetus to become a professional and may weed out the instructor who is more effective at "chores" than at teaching.

Cost

Any new program introduced into an educational system must eventually find its way into the budget area. Employing auxiliary personnel will require increased expenditures. Federal funds for teacher aides and the proposed educational media legislation may be available to share the cost. Improvement in any field often involves more money. The question which is paramount is whether the advantages gained from auxiliary personnel services are worth the added cost. Allocating funds for this purpose can help prevent waste of time, money and resources which occurs when professional people are prevented from developing their potential. Observation seems to indicate that there is a direct relationship between providing additional personnel and the effectiveness of learning. This has yet to be borne out by research since these programs are so new.

How Professionals Feel About Auxiliary Personnel

The para-professional employee is traditionally suspect by the profession he purports to assist. This was true of the engineering technician, vocational nurse, dental assistant, etc., and, in recent years, has been true of the library technical assistant and the teacher aide. The wrath of the professional takes the self-righteous approach that the para-professional may go beyond his capabilities or authority. This happens in some instances,

but those who are involved in the training of these para-professionals cannot accept this as a true generalization of the program's worth.

The American Library Association Interdivisional Committee found, in trying to establish behavioral objectives, that many of the fears of professionals resulted from poorly delineated tasks. If a professional cannot differentiate between those tasks he should do and those other personnel can handle, reluctance to accept supportive staff is understandable. The experience of this committee has shown the importance of involving professionals from the beginning in planning for the utilization and training of auxiliary personnel.

In 1965, the National Union of Teachers in England strongly supported the idea that if auxiliaries were given teaching responsibilities as feared, it would be better to have half-day sessions (5). From this statement it can be assumed that perhaps teachers had very little to do with setting objectives and determining tasks for aides. On the other side of the question, and it must be remembered, two years later, the NEA Journal (15) reported that some local teacher's associations include para-professionals as associate members and use them in relevant committee work.

An opinion poll by the NEA Research Division showed that 1 in 5 teachers had an aide working with them in some capacity (19). However, in examining the data we find that the major part of aid given was in the clerical field - 77% in elementary and 86% in secondary schools. This cannot be assumed that respondents were thinking in the large auxiliary

personnel terms as examined in this paper. Nine out of ten teachers indicated that aides had been helpful, but "Teachers do not view the employment of teacher aides as an effective means of increasing class size, nor do they think that development of teacher aide programs should take precedence over the improvement of professional salaries in budgetary planning." (19:17)

How Auxiliary Personnel Feel About Their Role

At the same time as the above teacher survey, NEA surveyed teacher aides and found that volunteer aides and part-time paid personnel found the work to be rewarding and, in the case of paid personnel, to be an excellent method of earning money in an interesting field. Full-time aides were sometimes dissatisfied at the limits placed on them. They felt they were qualified to handle more tasks. This may have been the result of a poor definition of their jobs in the beginning, a lack of communication between teacher and aide or, perhaps poor utilization of the aide's potential.

Summary

It seems possible to improve instruction at the junior college through use of auxiliary personnel. This concept has been tried by other professions with positive results, and preliminary experiments in the educational field indicate that this is also true in teaching. Its benefits cannot be accurately assessed until training programs for these individuals have been established and until colleges have utilized the graduates. The auxiliaries seem important from an innovation standpoint. To ask our instructors to be innovative and to re-design their thinking is of little

value unless we can provide supportive auxiliary personnel. An instructor with an already heavy load is not susceptible to sugesting ideas which will mean additional work for him, or which have little chance to succeed. Perhaps the auxiliary will open the door for creative thinking and pursuit of academic excellence through improvement of instruction.

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